

long way yet to go. We have seen the promise of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s vision of a colorblind America, but its reality lies in too many ways still beyond our grasps.

In some respects, this is a historic moment for this country, and historians may look back on this period as the true beginning of a post-civil rights era, a time in which the statutory gains made by an earlier generation are bearing fruit as a new generation fully realizes its dream for themselves and their children.

The current Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, and her predecessor, Colin Powell, are black. One of the front-runners in the Democratic Party's 2008 Presidential contest, Barack Obama, is African American.

In 1974, Boston was the scene of protracted racial violence as the result of a court-ordered busing to integrate the city's schools. Last month, Massachusetts inaugurated its first black Governor, Deval Patrick.

Here in the House of Representatives, the Chair of the Democratic Caucus is African American, and five committees are chaired by black Members: Homeland Security, Judiciary, Ways and Means, Government Administration, and the Ethics Committee. Last Sunday for the first time two black head coaches faced each other in the Super Bowl.

It would be easy to look at these examples of African Americans who have made it to the summit of our national life and conclude that the shackles of oppression and prejudice have finally been released, but that is not the case. And even as we honor those who have risen, we cannot neglect the millions more who are still trying, including many whose lives were shattered by Hurricane Katrina only a year and a half ago. As Senator OBAMA has said, things are better, but better is not good enough.

It would be easy to look at the achievements of Dr. David Satcher, who served as Surgeon General of the United States from 1998 to 2002, or Dr. Keith Black, the chairman of the Department of Neurosurgery at Cedars-Sinai in L.A., and conclude that African Americans are well represented among the Nation's physicians. Unfortunately, while blacks make up 12 percent of the population, they comprise only 3.6 percent of the Nation's doctors. This paucity of African American doctors is one reason why blacks lag behind whites in a host of crucial medical indicators.

White women in the United States can expect to live more than 4 years longer than black women, and white men have a life expectancy that is over 6 years longer than African American men.

□ 1815

African Americans in the U.S. also have higher mortality rates than Caucasians for many diseases, including heart disease, stroke, diabetes, pros-

tate cancer, breast cancer and AIDS. Nationwide, the infant mortality rate for blacks is double that, double that of the white population.

Or we could look with optimism on the achievements of black business professionals, who are increasingly found in the upper management of American corporations and who are starting their own businesses at an ever-increasing rate. African Americans who own businesses increased by nearly a third in the 5 years from 1997 to 2002 and now number more than half a million nationwide. But these numbers cannot compensate for the fact that only four of the Nation's Fortune 500 companies are led by African Americans.

More generally, the median income for white households is \$48,000, while that of black households is only \$31,000. More telling, nearly one in four African Americans live in poverty, while fewer than one in ten whites do.

It would be easy to look at the achievements of Neil de Grasse Tyson, the astrophysicist and director of the Hayden Planetarium, and Dr. Stephen Mayo, an associate professor of biology and chemistry at CalTech and think that the burden of inferior schools has been lifted from the shoulders of African Americans. Sadly, that is not the case.

At every level of education, blacks are disadvantaged in the classroom. According to the NAACP, far less money is spent on black pupils than on white pupils, more than \$1,400 less per student in most impoverished areas. This inequality means that black children do not get access to the technology and other resources that white kids have.

More importantly, the quality of teachers in predominantly African American schools is not equal to that of teachers in white schools. These schools have the least experienced teachers, the highest percentage of out-of-field teachers, the highest teacher mobility rates, the greatest incidence of teachers who leave the profession. The consequences are predictable: profound gaps in reading and math that emerge in early elementary school and persist through high school, and much lower high school graduation rates.

So, Madam Speaker, even as we celebrate the many and profound gifts that African Americans have made to our country, we cannot lose sight of the urgent need for all of us to do more to rededicate ourselves to achieving the equality that is the cornerstone of American democracy. Things are better, but better is not good enough.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. SHEA-PORTER). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DREIER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ENGLISH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. ENGLISH addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE PAINFUL COST OF THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Speaker, on Monday, the President submitted his budget for our Nation. In that budget, it would be easy to look at it and say, this is all about numbers, it is just a rational approach, it is just a plan, it is an impersonal thing. But, in fact, Madam Speaker, what a budget is is a moral statement about who matters in our society.

What a budget is is a reflection of our own humanity. It talks about who counts, who doesn't, who matters, who doesn't, what are our priorities. In fact, what the budget shows, Madam Speaker, is our values and what we hold dear, and what we believe is really just not that important.

Let me say as we approach this budgetary season, this process in Congress, it is very important to remember that this budget will tell much, much more about our society and who we are than we might imagine. In fact, we should use some guiding principles as we approach this budget. And one of them is very simple, and it is a quote that comes from the great late Senator Hubert Humphrey from my State of Minnesota.

Senator Humphrey said, "The moral test of any government is how it treats those in the dawn of life, the children; those in the dusk of life, the elderly; and those in the shadow of life, the disadvantaged."

This budget is a measure of how we stand, how we fit along these very important metrics that Senator Humphrey laid out for us. And by that test, the proposal that the President set forth fails. It doesn't value the hardworking investment, the hardworking energy, the blood, sweat and tears of Minnesotans or Americans.

This budget proposal diminishes the importance of health. It includes \$78